



Retiree News

A Supplement to the Desert Airman

Friday, July 25, 2003

Notes to Know

Mailing of supplement on hold

The mailing of the Retiree News Supplement to the *Desert Airman*, published the last Friday of January, April, July and October, is on hold. In the meantime, the Supplement is available for pick-up at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base or online at www.dm.af.mil/pa/news/retiree_news_archive.html. Using Adobe Acrobat, follow the instructions on the Web site to view up to two years of retiree news supplements.

In addition, all retirees are encouraged to continue to contact the Retiree Activities Office at 228-5100 regarding any address changes so the roster can remain current.

RAO Volunteers needed

The Retiree Activities Office is often asked for volunteer help. The RAO coordinates with other volunteer services on base and at the Veterans Administration Hospital. Those who are interested can call the RAO Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 228-5100 or send an e-mail to retired@dm.af.mil. They can also visit the office, located at 5345 East Madera Street. Simply tell the office of your interests and talents for any volunteer work.

Society of Military Widows

Society members meet the third Saturday of each month at noon for a general meeting and lunch at the officers club. The dates for the next three meetings are Aug. 16, Sept. 20 and Oct. 18. The cost for lunch is \$10. For reservations, call Luise Bell one week prior to the meeting at 663-0279.

Members also meet the second Tuesday of each month at the officers club for a birthday luncheon. Members with birthdays during the month are especially encouraged to attend.

The society welcomes widows of all service members and ranks who died on active duty and in retirement. For more information, call Suzanne Shafe at 579-0789.

Eligible Vets receive funds

The Department of Defense, working with the Department of Veteran Affairs, started a new compensation program for many disabled military retirees May 31. More details are available at: <http://www.defenselink.mil/prhome/crsc.html>.

Eligible for the compensation are retirees who have 20 years of service for retired pay computation and who either have disabilities because of combat injuries for which they have been awarded the Purple Heart and are rated at least 10 percent disabled or who are rated at least 60

percent disabled because of armed conflict, hazardous duty, training exercises or mishaps involving military equipment. Members must apply to their own branch of service using the Department of Defense Form 2860, Application for Combat-Related Special Computation.

The form is available on line at: <http://www.dior.whs.mil/forms/DD2860.pdf>. The Retiree Activities Office at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base has copies available for those un-

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Govt grave marker requests easier

The Department of Veterans Affairs has revised its application form to make requesting a VA grave marker easier. The new form, application for standard government headstone or marker (VA Form 40-1330), includes updated information about changes that expand eligibility for a government marker.

The new form and instruction sheets also permit better communication between VA and veterans' families, according to VA officials.

For deaths on or after Sept. 11, 2001, Public Laws 107-103 and 107-330 made government markers available for use on veterans' graves that were already marked with privately furnished headstones or markers. Previous law prevented VA from furnishing markers when a grave was already marked.

The laws require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to report to Congress by Feb. 1, 2006, on the effectiveness of this benefit and to recommend whether it should continue. One of the changes made to the application form

will allow VA to report on this new benefit by tracking its use.

In January 2002, VA introduced a toll-free fax service for submitting applications. This service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week as an alternative to regular mail. Instructions, as well as the fax number, 1-800-455-7143, are on the VA Web site at www.cem.va.gov. The application form on the Web site can be filled in and printed for submitting by mail or fax. Questions about a headstone or marker application can be directed to VA's Memorial Programs Service applicant assistance unit at 1-800-697-6947.

VA handles more than 1,000 requests daily for veterans' markers. Last year more than 348,000 headstones and markers were furnished for veterans' graves worldwide, generally within 60 days of VA receiving the application.

(Information from <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afretire> contributed to this article)

355th MDG Pharmacy faces renovation

Renovation and expansion of the pharmacy in the main clinic, located in Building 400, has been delayed until August and will take three to four months to complete.

During the renovation the main pharmacy will move to a temporary location at the rear of the clinic.

During the renovation, users are asked to use the temporary pharmacy for all new prescriptions from the D-M clinic as well as any acute (pain, antibiotics) medications as

they do now. The difference is users are asked to drop off new prescriptions at the Satellite Pharmacy for maintenance or chronic medications like blood pressure, thyroid and arthritis, for pick-up the following day. Refill service will not be affected.

Pharmacy personnel ask for cooperation and patience during the renovation. The new automation and organization will improve pharmacy services and workflow. For more information, call the pharmacy at 228-2854.

D-M fitness center offers wide variety

By Retired Col. Rita Gengler
Retiree Activities Office

Have you been meaning to check out the new Fitness and Sports Center? Me too. Finally, I paid a visit and was very impressed!

The center, which opened about a year ago, is open Mondays through Fridays from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m., Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sundays from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

From the parking lot, you enter a large lobby that includes an information desk and nutrition center. The weight training room is on the left and the basketball court is on the right. Farther on and to

the right are the locker rooms, complete with sauna and access to the indoor pool. Beyond the locker rooms is the aerobics room.

Cardio vascular training machines are located upstairs. An indoor track is also upstairs. Eleven laps equal one mile. There is an elevator for those who need it.

Fitness center classes are held daily, although most classes are held Mondays through Fridays. Classes include water and step aerobics, pilates, spinning and self defense classes for all ages. The class days and times are published frequently in the sports section of the *Desert Airman*. You can also

call 228-0021 or 228-0022 for specific class information.

Jay Junsay, sports director, does personal training that includes working with new clients for three sessions. He said if people have known health problems they should have their physician provide written guidance. Junsay refers others to the Health and Wellness Center, 228-2294, for physical evaluation before he outlines a program for them.

No appointments are necessary to start a fitness training program. Other than minimal fees for some of the fitness classes, there is no charge for use of the center.

The Haeffner Fitness Center, located about a block away on 6th Street, is also available for use Mondays through Fridays from 5:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. It is closed weekends and holidays. Aerobic classes, cardiovascular and weight training equipment are available. While Haeffner does not have an indoor pool or track, Junsay pointed out that if the new center is full, it will have machines available for use.

I found the fitness center staff pleasant and helpful when I visited. If you have been meaning to get more active, or have been looking for a different location for your present exercise program, check out the new D-M Fitness and Sports Center.

Compensation

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able to access the form by computer.

Each service branch will review the applications of their own retirees. Payments will be retroactive to June 1 for all approved applications. Services may be contacted at the follow-

ing toll-free numbers: Army 1-866-281-3254; Navy and Marine Corps 1-877-366-2772; and Air Force 1-866-229-7074.

Service reviews will determine which disabilities are combat related. Services will presume that disabilities awarded veteran disability compensation based on service-connected exposure to hazards, which are clearly combat-related, are combat-related for the purpose of CRSC. These include agent orange, gulf war

illnesses, radiation exposure, mustard gas and lewisite. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder will require combat-related documentation.


Retirees will be informed of denied applications and the reason for denial. They may reapply later or appeal the decision if they believe their disabilities are combat-related. (Information from <https://www.defenselink.mil/prhome/crsc.html> contributed to this article)

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Retirement home fees alter, affect retirees

The National Defense Authorization Act contains some significant changes to the structure and operations of the Armed Forces Retirement Home that directly affect retirees.

Some fees were reduced at the Gulfport location. The fee structure is: 35 percent of all income for independent living, to a maximum of \$1,014 per month (a change from 40 percent and maximum of \$1,500), assisted living is 40 percent of all income, to a maximum of \$1,521, and skilled long-term care is 65 percent to a maximum of \$2,535. Additionally, residents at the Gulfport location will benefit from a temporary reduction in fees: \$800 maximum for independent living and \$1,300 for assisted

living, until renovated quarters are available in December 2006. Skilled long-term care is the same as at the Washington D.C. location. In order to be a resident at either location, retirees must be able to live in independent living. Then as their health needs change, they are transferred to assisted living or skilled care. There are no direct admissions to assisted living or skilled care.

Gulfport, Miss has a six to seven month waiting list. Washington D.C. has vacancies in Independent Living. For information on the Gulfport location, call 1-800-332-3527. The Washington D.C. location can be reached at 1-800-422-9988.

Updating Social Security cards important

There are a number of reasons to request a Social Security card, including marriage, name changes and lost cards. The first step is to complete an application and show identification. If you just need a replacement card, you can use a driver's license, employer ID card or a passport to prove your identity, just to name a few. If you want to change the name on your card, you also need proof of your old name and new name. If it's your first time applying for a card, you need to prove your age,

citizenship, or noncitizen, status and who you are. You must take the original documents, or copies certified by the issuing agency to the Social Security office. Photocopies cannot be accepted. For general information and to schedule an appointment, call 1-800-772-1213. The Social Security Web page gives all the information you need to apply for a card in person or by mail. You can even download the application. The Web site address is <http://www.ssa.gov/replace/sscard.html>.

NPRC, Internet make info requests easier

The National Personnel Records Center is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files.

Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents. Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can be downloaded from the online Web site at <http://vetrecs.archives.gov>.

The new web-based application was designed to provide better service on these requests by eliminating the records center's mailroom processing time. Also, because the requester will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information, will be minimized. (Information from <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afretire> contributed to this article)

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